

REMARKS

This is in response to the office action of 9 July 2004.

1. The objection to the drawing has been noted.

However, Applicant does not believe that a change to the drawing is required. In the specification, the workpiece changer (27, 28) has been labeled. Since the workpiece changer has always been illustrated, additional illustration is not necessary.

2. The specification has been amended to clarify the terminology used. The Examiner should appreciate that "carriages" and "slides" are interchangeably used in the machine tool art to refer to a structure which moves in the longitudinal direction and in the transverse direction, usually on rails or tracks. A cross slide or cross carriage is a carriage or slide which has a longitudinal slide or carriage and a transverse slide or carriage.

In the specification, with reference to elements 6 and 7, it is noted that both "workpiece holder" and "carrier" can apply. The holder is used to refer to the part which actually engages the workpiece, i.e. the clamp or chuck, while the workpiece carrier is the structure on which the holder is mounted. In the present invention, the holders automatically engage and disengage with the

workpiece. This has all been clarified in the specification and with the clarification, a good part of the issues with respect to the claims have likewise been removed if they were issues at all.

The specification as amended does not contain any new matter.

3. The claims have been amended to eliminate the informalities noted by the Examiner. While a clarification of the terminology used has been provided in connection with the specification change, for the record, the following may be noted: "The workpiece carrier is the structure on which the automatic holder is mounted. There are two of the latter which engage each workpiece.

A cross slide has a longitudinal slide or carriage and a transverse slide or carriage. The terms are used as they are used in the machine tool art generally.

Slides and carriages are used interchangeably in the art.

In claim 2, the term "grinding" was erroneously used twice and an appropriate correction has been made. With respect to claim 3 and elsewhere, when two slides are recited originally and one slide is described in a certain way, "the other slide" is not at all lacking in antecedent basis. The rejection to a lack of

antecedent basis is improper although the issue has been rendered moot by changing the terminology used.

4. Applicant appreciates the Examiner's suggestion with respect to claim 3, line 7.

All other grounds of objection to the claims or grounds of rejection under 35 USC 112 have been removed as well.

5. Claim 1 has been amended to make crystal clear to make sure that each of the carriers is formed as a cross slide and that the workpiece carriers thus form as cross slides hold the workpiece both for the machining and the collection of the workpiece and its return to the workpiece replacement station.

As thus amended, claim 1 (and the claims which depend therefrom) no longer can be considered as fully met by U.S. Patent 6,012,838 if they could have been so considered before.

An essential difference between the machine tool according the invention and the machine tool for machining crankshafts disclosed in US 6,102,838 resides in the fact that the two workpiece carriers are each formed as cross slides (4, 5) with automatically actuatable workpiece holders (6, 7) jointly engageable in common with that workpiece for automatically

displacing that workpiece between that regions. The tool holders, being displaceable on cross slides, can not only serve for the transport of the workpiece to effect an automatic workpiece replacement but can also serve for holding and the displacement and positioning of the workpiece during machining. The workpiece can thus be machined in a workpiece carrier with rotation of the workpiece and its other displacement for machining purposes and than, without other manual action on the part of the operator, automatically displace into the workpiece replacement position and their automatically deposit it. There is no additional workpiece feeding or gripping mechanism required.

The machine tool for machining crankshafts as disclosed in US 6,102,838 is not comparable with the machine tool according to the application. US 6,102,838 relates to a machine tool including a machining station (P1) with two holder discs (110, 120) for machining the crankshafts (200) and two parallel workstations (S1, S2) arranged upstream and downstream from the machining station (P1) for rotating the two crankshafts. The machine tool is surmounted by a portal (300) which ensures, via a moving carriage (310), transfer of the crankshafts (200) from one workstation (Si or S2) to the other workstation (S2 or Si). The carriage (310) is

equipped with two clamps (311, 312) for gripping the crankshafts (200) during the transfer. However the two clamps (311, 312) do not serve for holding the work pieces during machining. The two gripping clamps (311, 312) are not each formed as cross slides but are commonly disposed on the moving carriage (310) of the portal (300).

Claim 1 is not anticipated by the applied reference. While the Examiner has not made a rejection under 35 USC 103 here, it is Applicants view that such a rejection on the Assie reference '838 would not be proper if it would have been made since that reference, not only devoid of a pair of workpiece carriers as now defined, also fails to provide any basis for modifying the structure shown in Assie to have two workpiece carriers which are capable of holding a workpiece for both machining and transferring as claimed. An obviousness rejection would not stand either.

Claims 2 through 15 have not been rejected on art at all and presumably are allowable now that the grounds of rejection under 35 USC 112 have been removed.

All of the claims are thus deemed to be allowable and a favorable communication to that effect would be appreciated.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given at the foot of this amendment to come to agreement upon any Examiner's amendment which might be advantageous to facilitate passage to issue.

Respectfully submitted,
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